

degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself."

Today, we honor the memory of those better men and women. These heroes paid the ultimate price so we can enjoy the freedoms enshrined in our Constitution. They fought and died for this more perfect union. I am reminded of Winston Churchill's comment about democracy following the fall of Nazi Germany. He said, "Many forms of government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

Since the founding of our nation, countless brave men and women stood in the face of imminent danger that we might continue their pursuit of a more equal, free, and prosperous society. And we are eternally indebted to and grateful for these champions of our experiment in democracy.

Madam Speaker, I am privileged and humbled by the opportunity to recognize these brave individuals.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MARIJUANA OPPORTUNITY REINVESTMENT AND EXPUNGEMENT ACT OF 2021

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 28, 2021

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to have introduced the "Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act of 2021," or the "MORE Act of 2021." This long overdue legislation would reverse the failed policy of criminalizing marijuana on the federal level and would take steps to address the heavy toll this policy has taken across the country, particularly on communities of color.

The MORE Act would make three important changes to federal law:

- (1) remove marijuana, or cannabis, from the list of federally controlled substances;
- (2) authorize the provision of resources, funded by an excise tax on marijuana, to address the needs of communities that have been seriously impacted by the War on Drugs, including increasing the participation of communities of color in the burgeoning cannabis market; and
- (3) provide for the expungement of Federal marijuana convictions and arrests.

For far too long, we have treated marijuana as a criminal justice problem instead of as a matter of personal choice and public health. Whatever one's views are on the use of marijuana for recreational or medicinal use, the policy of arrests, prosecution, and incarceration at the Federal level has proven unwise and unjust.

This issue is not new to Congress. There have been many Members who have introduced bills upon which provisions in this bill are based. For instance, Representative BAR-

BARA LEE has sponsored bills that are the foundation of key provisions of the MORE Act, and I thank her for her longstanding leadership on this issue. Representative EARL BLUMENAUER has also been an indefatigable advocate and has supported everything we have done to get to where we are today. I thank him, as well as my other colleagues who have joined me as original cosponsors on the bill.

Federal action on this issue would follow the growing recognition in the states that the status quo is unacceptable. Despite the federal government's continuing criminalization of marijuana, 36 states and the District of Columbia have legalized medical cannabis. Fifteen states and the District of Columbia have legalized cannabis for adult recreational use.

I have long believed that the criminalization of marijuana has been a mistake, and the racially disparate enforcement of marijuana laws has only compounded this mistake, with serious consequences, particularly for communities of color.

It was only in the early part of the 20th century that marijuana began to be criminalized in the United States—mainly because of misinformation and hysteria, based at least in part on racially-biased stereotypes connecting marijuana use and people of color, particularly African-Americans and Latinos. In 1970, when President Nixon announced the War on Drugs and signed the Controlled Substances Act into law, the federal government placed marijuana on Schedule I, the most restrictive schedule that is attached to the most serious criminal penalties, where—unfairly and unjustifiably—it has remained ever since.

As a consequence of this decision, thousands of individuals—overwhelmingly people of color—have been subjected, by the federal government, to unjust prison sentences for marijuana offenses. It is time for this manifest injustice to end. The MORE Act would remove marijuana from Schedule I and the Controlled Substances Act altogether, thereby decriminalizing it at the Federal level.

This is only fair, particularly because the same racial animus motivating the enactment of marijuana laws also led to racially disproportionate enforcement of such laws, which has had a substantial, negative impact on communities of color. In fact, nationwide, the communities that have been most harmed by marijuana enforcement are benefitting the least from the legal marijuana marketplace.

The MORE Act would address some of these negative impacts, by establishing an Opportunity Trust Fund within the Department of Treasury to fund programs within the Department of Justice and the Small Business Administration to empower communities of color and those adversely impacted by the War on Drugs. These programs would provide services to individuals, including job training, reentry services and substance use disorder services; provide funds for loans to assist small businesses that are owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals; and provide resources for programs that minimize barriers to marijuana licensing and employment for individuals adversely impacted by the War on Drugs.

The collateral consequences of a conviction for marijuana possession—and even sometimes for a mere arrest—can be devastating. For those saddled with a criminal conviction, it can be difficult or impossible to vote, to obtain educational loans, to get a job, to maintain a

professional license, to secure housing, to receive government assistance, or even to adopt a child.

These exclusions create an often-permanent second-class status for millions of Americans. This is unacceptable and counterproductive, especially given the disproportionate impact that enforcement of marijuana laws has had on communities of color. The MORE Act recognizes this injustice and addresses these harmful effects by expunging and sealing federal convictions and arrests for marijuana offenses. Indeed, the states have led the way—and continue to lead the way—on marijuana, but our federal laws have not kept pace with the obvious need for change. We need to catch up because the public supports reform and because it is the right thing to do.

In my view, applying criminal penalties, with their attendant collateral consequences for marijuana offenses is unjust and harmful to our society. The MORE Act comprehensively addresses this injustice, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

HONORING THE 21ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS 2021 SERVICE ACADEMY APPOINTEES

HON. CHIP ROY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 28, 2021

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, today we congratulate the 2021 Service Academy appointees from the 21st Congressional District of Texas.

The Following individuals have accepted Academy Appointments.

Jackson N. Basil, Texas Military Institute, Boerne, United States Air Force Academy. Kurt Bliss, Texas Military Institute, Fair Oaks Ranch, United States Air Force Academy. Felicia S. Early, Saint Mary's Hall, San Antonio, United States Air Force Academy. Cullen Ingersoll, Winston Churchill High School, San Antonio, United States Air Force Academy. Abigail M. Jones, The International School of the Americas, San Antonio, United States Air Force Academy. Hunter G. Loftin, Winston Churchill High School, San Antonio, United States Air Force Academy. Thomas A. Erwin, Central Catholic High School, San Antonio, United States Naval Academy. Leah A. Lara, Lehman High School, San Marcos, United States Naval Academy. Alexander D. Boarnet, Winston Churchill High School, San Antonio, United States Military Academy. Zoe R. Johnson, Antonio College Preparatory High School, San Antonio, United States Military Academy. Wyatt A. Richardson, Covenant Academy, San Marcos, United States Military Academy. Robert A. Nelson IV, Boerne-Samuel V Champion High School, Boerne, United States Merchant Marine Academy. Matthew R. Romero, Our Lady of the Hills College Preparatory High School, Kerrville, United States Merchant Marine Academy. Andrew H. Wilson, Dripping Springs Christian Academy, Johnson City, United States Merchant Marine Academy.

These outstanding students have much to contribute to their chosen Academy and to our country. We appreciate their talents and their patriotism.

I hope my colleagues in the House of Representatives will join me in congratulating